

5.10. Carry out public and media relations to build respect for the tourism industry

This Strategic Action builds respect for the tourism industry in Montana.

Recommended Tactics

ITRR

- » Provide valid and objective research and analysis regarding the economic impacts of Montana tourism.
- » Ensure that valid and objective data is widely available regarding the tourism industry's role in Montana's economy.

TAC, MTOT, Regions, CVBs

- » Disseminate accurate information regarding the economic and social benefits of tourism in the state/region/community.
- » Solicit media coverage regarding the benefits of tourism in the state/region/community.
- » Solicit media coverage of Montana tourism success stories.
- » Provide tourism stakeholders and tourism partners with data, research, analysis, and other communications regarding successes and benefits of tourism to share with elected officials, community members, and other interested parties.
- » Provide elected officials with data, research, analysis, and press releases regarding success stories and economic benefits of tourism.

Businesses & Organizations

- » Share data and information regarding tourism's successes and benefits with elected officials and community members.
- » Encourage local media to cover tourism stories.
- » Let the community know when the business or organization uses local or Montana products (see Strategic Action 2.5.).

Indicators of Success

- » Local press coverage of tourism successes, the benefits of tourism, and tourism stories is more extensive and more prominent.
- » Neither the lodging tax nor its partial allocation to tourism promotion is threatened in the state legislature.
- » City and county elected officials voice support for tourism as part of a sustainable local economic base.

Background & Rationale

“Respect” for the tourism industry is one of three key pillars identified by the Tourism Advisory Council to be strengthened through the strategic plan.

By raising awareness of the economic importance of tourism among elected officials, the business community, and the general public, the industry can win a broad base of public support, which in turn will help preserve and enhance the lodging tax and the tourism industry.

Gathering and publicizing valid data will provide quantitative support for tourism’s economic and social contributions. Gathering and publicizing success stories provides quantitative and qualitative evidence of tourism’s positive attributes, such as the innovation and entrepreneurialism of the industry, the amenities it brings for Montana residents, the community spirit and pride it can foster, and the economic successes it achieves.

Sharing information regarding the economic value of tourism also helps land management agencies evaluate the balanced use of public lands.

Raising awareness of economic importance among the industry’s own stakeholders enables them to become more effective advocates for tourism – individually and collectively – at the state and local levels.

Working on a consistent basis to track tourism’s successes and build a strong base of respect can strengthen Montana tourism stakeholders’ position when defending the industry and the lodging tax during legislative sessions and with the executive branch.